

30 March 1959

STAT

A Tribute to General Donovan

The man more responsible than any other for the existence of the Central Intelligence Agency has passed away. Major General William J. Donovan died at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington on Sunday afternoon, February 8th. His last trial was undoubtedly the severest of his life, for he had been desperately ill for nearly three years and the enforced quiet was hard on this amazing man of action.

But even in his declining days Bill Donovan knew that his work was being carried on. The President awarded him the National Security Medal in recognition of his creation of the central intelligence concept. A striking oil portrait of him was completed and he was able to come see it in the reception room of our present administration building. It will be hung in a place of honor in the new building when it is completed. And many of Bill's old friends from OSS days visited him in the hospital and talked about the continuation of his work.

It is appropriate in this moment of tribute to the passing of a great man that we take note of the significance of his accomplishment. In General Donovan's own words, the Office of Strategic Services was the "first comprehensive organization for intelligence and unorthodox warfare in the history of the United States." He noted, "The importance of OSS lies not only in its role in hastening military victory, but also in the development of the concept of unorthodox warfare. Of even farther reaching importance are the lessons learned and the contributions made to the future of American defense and foreign policy."

General Donovan said, "The experience of OSS showed above all how essential it is for winning the war and keeping the peace to base national policy upon accurate and complete intelligence. Unorthodox warfare is now recognized as a vital part of our defense system."

Even at the height of the war General Donovan was looking forward to the peace and pressing for the establishment of a central intelligence organization. In October 1944 he produced a paper entitled "The Basis for a Permanent World-Wide Intelligence Service." This document was used in the preparation of both the Executive Directive which created the Central Intelligence Group in 1946 and the National Security Act of 1947 which established the Central Intelligence Agency.

Many words of tribute have been written and spoken by General Donovan's friends and admirers. I was deeply moved by the sermon of Monsignor John K. Cartwright at the requiem mass for General Donovan. David Bruce, our Ambassador to Germany, was one of the top officials of OSS and worked very closely with General Donovan. His letter to the New York Times expresses the views of many of us. We are enclosing these statements for you to read.

General Donovan will undoubtedly be the subject of many more words by friends, biographers and historians. The one that will interest all of us the most will be that now under preparation by Whitney Shepardson, another of the General's chief lieutenants during OSS days. Mr. Shepardson has been given full access to General Donovan's personal files and the OSS archives in order to prepare a history of the organization which will be a lasting tribute. This work, which will be published by Columbia University Press, appropriately enough, is being sponsored by several foundations.

The greatest tribute of all can be paid by us in the organization that Bill Donovan helped create. He will know his life's work has been well done if the CIA can help assure the nation's security by keeping the Government fully informed of world developments.

Kindly share this with your staff, particularly any who may have served in the OSS under General Donovan.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Allen W. Dulles", written in a cursive style.

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

NEW YORK TIMES
15 February 1959

Tribute to Wm. Donovan

General's Qualities of Leadership, Vivid Personality Recalled

The writer of the following letter is United States Ambassador to West Germany.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

The news of Bill Donovan's death is a profound shock to all of his associates, friends and acquaintances. It hardly seems possible that this ageless man, this almost elemental force of nature, has been removed from our immediate contact.

Wherever there was a stir, and especially whenever--all too frequently--trouble brewed, Donovan was there. He was an adventurer, in the best sense of the word, in the modern world.

Imagination and the quality of great leadership were his dominant characteristics. The word "impossible" was not in his lexicon. What man had done was only a springboard from which to vault into the unknown.

Career of O. S. S.

I was most closely familiar with him during more than four years' service in his Office of Strategic Services organization. There he was the inspirer of more than thirty thousand people. All were fish in his net, tumbled together in what organizationally appeared to be chaos.

His mandate was almost unlimited in the field of clandestine activities. Nor did any chief ever as readily respond to such a challenge. Something had to knit together beings so disparate, recruited for tasks so indefinite. The polarization came from one individual--Donovan.

In the midst of the gravest preoccupations, with a task so comprehensive as, at times, to appall his subordinates, the General remained unruffled, calm to deal with the exigencies of world-wide

covert operations, but able to turn what seemed an equal concentration on the marital, or extramarital, problems, the health or illness, the financial tribulations or any other concerns of those who worked for him.

He contracted enmities, but never as readily as he made friends. Giving complete loyalty himself, he commanded it from others.

He taxed his brain and body without mercy. In his sixties, he was still a threatening opponent on a squash court. Sleep he scarcely considered a necessity but an imposition by nature on man's obligation for self-improvement. For him no moment was an occasion for idleness. On uncomfortable and dangerous airplane flights he was usually discovered amusing himself with a German, French, Spanish, Italian or other grammar, unless he was concocting a complicated scheme to harass the enemy.

Excitement Over Ideas

His personal charm was disarming. His sympathies were almost universal. He could not abide cowardice, being so constituted that this weakness was incomprehensible to him.

His imagination was unlimited. Ideas were his plaything. Excitement made him snort like a race horse. Woe to the officer who turned down a project because, on its face, it seemed ridiculous, or at least unusual. For painful weeks under his command I tested the possibility of using bats--taken from concentrations in Western caves--to destroy Tokyo. The General, backed by the intrigued President Roosevelt, was only dissuaded from further experiments in this field when it appeared probable that the cave bats would not survive a trans-Pacific flight at high altitudes.

He was a torchbearer of much that was most luminous during American participation in wars. In civil life he was adamant in the protection of our liberties and traditions.

I feel I can speak for thousands of others who served him during his great period in saying that I wish we had adequately conveyed to him during his lifetime the deep affection and admiration we always entertained for him.

David K. E. Bruce

Berlin, Feb. 9, 1959

Excerpts from a sermon delivered by the Right Rev. John K. Cartwright at the Mass of Requiem for the repose of the soul of General William J. Donovan, St. Matthew's Cathedral, February 11, 1959.

As our years go on it becomes a more frequent duty for each of us to say farewell to those who will no longer occupy a part of our lives except in grateful and loving memory. The citizen and soldier of whom we are taking leave today filled an exceptional role in the lives of multitudes of people. This gathering testifies both by number and character how great a role that was. General Donovan bore an illustrious part in the two great wars that have filled so much of our century. No less illustrious were the services he rendered in our years of anxious and troubled peace. His record of achievement and honor has been much reviewed since the day of his death and will always be remembered in the pages of our history. But this life of combat and of leadership, of service and example is ended now. He has gone from the scene of his success to meet his final judgment, his final reward, his final destiny.

He saw his life in terms of his religious faith and in accordance with that faith we have brought his remains for our last farewell before God's holy altar. Here we pay then our personal respect and ask the Church to send him forth from this world with her prayers and blessings, with the thoughts which the sacred liturgy places in our minds in the presence of death.

The saints who are today proposed by the Church, for our admiration and example were once conducted to the grave by these rites, as was the lowly parishioner of last week or month, as was the Holy Father who ruled over God's Church for so many years until God called him. And this great patriot and soldier is sent from us with the same insistent thoughts: life is short, death is certain, our human nature is faulty and imperfect, this world is not our destiny, our earthly achievements are not what is important since their reward cannot satisfy immortal souls, our greatest success is trivial in comparison with the success of God's approval, even our greatest loves and greatest friendships are at their true goal when they are blessed with God's love and friendship, our death which humanly seems so final is in God's purpose no end but a passageway leading to another life of which the scope and splendor fulfill the potentialities of an immortal soul.

God has made us to be a part of the lives of our fellow men. He has made us necessary to each other. He has His answer to the sneer of the ancient sinner when He says to us: "Thou art thy brother's keeper."

Each of us has his purpose, fulfilled on earth but planned by God for us, to carry out a human ministry. He who does this well serves God and can look for God's reward. Thus the deeds and accomplishments of this man, as brave soldier, as distinguished captain, as wise counsellor, as ambassador of his country in days of anxiety and peril-- these deeds are part, not only of man's records but of God's. He sees in them not as we do the splendor and the glory, but the spirit of fulfillment of a task assigned by His holy will, the faithfulness, the loyalty, the humility of faith. Seen in this light, those who are illustrious in man's history, like those who are lowly and unsung, both have the merit of doing what God wants them to do in the rank where God has placed them. Perhaps this is the reason why the Holy Scripture so often compares the life of the Christian with that of the soldier. This is the reason why in our human way we express the confidence that this soldier, after a life full of valor and helpfulness, has gone to hear the word of his commander: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

May his soul rest in God's peace. And may those whom he has loved and the many whom he has served be worthy to know him again in the communion of saints.